



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

October 29, 2004

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and for giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Michigan Senate Defeats First-Year Driver Limitation

The Michigan Senate defeated a bill on October 6 that would have limited the amount of unrelated passengers a first-year driver could have in their vehicle to one. The bill, House Bill 4600, was defeated on a 21-17 vote.

Proponents of the bill argued that passenger restrictions would improve safety. But opponents pointed out that the bill would ban such activities such as carpooling to school and double dating.

I was one of the leading opponents of the bill arguing that the state's graduated driver's license system has been successful in addressing safety concerns. The Michigan graduated driver's license system restricts new drivers in several ways. During their first year, drivers can only drive with an adult over the age of 21 and for the second year, they are not permitted to drive after midnight.

The Senate had amended the bill so that it could be enforced only as a secondary offense. Another amendment would have allowed a driver to carry more than one unrelated passenger if they have received written authorization from a parent or legal guardian. These changes made the bill difficult to enforce by law enforcement officers.

Here is my statement that I made during the Senate debate on House Bill 4600 as printed in the Senate Journal:

"Mr. President, I rise in opposition to House Bill No. 4600. This bill would limit first-year drivers to one unrelated passenger in the car with them. Proponents believe this bill will reduce accidents among young drivers, but we already have addressed this problem with a highly successful graduated driver's license system. This bill, while well-intentioned, violates the law of diminishing returns. We are greatly restricting the pursuit of happiness for a huge number of people for a theoretical improvement in safety. Are we willing to trade one of our God-given, inalienable rights so cheaply? How can we be so

willing to punish all kids and all families so quickly because of a tiny faction of drivers who behave irresponsibly?

We don't take that approach with gun laws in this state, and we are right not to. We don't take everyone's gun rights away because of the criminal activities of a few. Why would we restrict this privilege which is far more widely exercised and cherished? Are we willing to so callously ban the widespread practice of kids carpooling to school? This bill is so clumsy it would keep two kids from giving a stranded friend a ride home. Any decent person will give that ride anyway, and then we will have made them lawbreakers.

Have we forgotten the experiences of our own youth? Didn't you ever borrow your dad's car to go out for a concert, a game, or a hamburger with your friends? Isn't there a value to the exhilarating thrill of freedom you felt in doing that? Do you want to be responsible for banning that?

Mr. President, I'll never forget a steamy August night in the back seat of a car with Patty Otto on a double date (**Editor's Note:** *mere kissing I am told*). This bill will make the double date against the law. I refuse to believe this Senate could be that callous and cruel. Please defeat House Bill No. 4600."

Election Day Information

Election Day is just around the corner and I urge everyone to get out and vote on November 2nd. The right to vote is most fundamental measure of a democracy. Your vote can make a difference in the future of the United States and the state of Michigan.

The Secretary of State's Michigan Voter Information Center provides voters with important information that is just a mouse click away. You can log on to the Michigan Voter Information Center at www.michigan.gov/vote. The site provides important information such as identifying your voting location, contact information for your local clerk's office, the voting system that you will be using at the polls, a sample ballot, and many other interesting features. The website also provides available links to a candidate's website, biographical information, and campaign finance reports. In addition, the Secretary of State's website (www.michigan.gov/sos) may also provide some valuable information to you.

If you have any questions or concerns on Election Day, please contact your local clerk's office or a poll worker inside the voting location. Here are some important numbers to remember on Election Day:

Clinton Township Clerk and Elections Office: (586) 286-9422

Roseville Clerk's Office: (586) 445-5440

Sterling Heights Clerk's Office: (586) 446-2420

City of Utica Clerk's Office: (586) 739-1600

Macomb County Clerk's Office: (586) 469-5120

Secretary of State Bureau of Elections: (517) 373-2540

The polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. at night. I hope you take this opportunity to vote. I am also available to answer any questions or concerns.

Switalski Named Legislator of the Year by School Social Workers

The Michigan Association of School Social Workers presented me with their annual Legislator of the Year Award on October 21.

The award is given out to legislators for many different reasons. I received it because I have fought for many years to ensure that students receive the proper funding as well as guarantee that schools support services are available to enhance their education quality. The organization advocates the “delivery of school social work services to meet the needs of all children” and works to promote legislation “that would improve the delivery of school social work services and enhance the education of all children.”

Social workers provide an important component in our schools. They provide an important role in helping to advance the ability of a school to accomplish its academic mission by providing support and also by providing a crucial link between teachers, administrators and the student and his or her family.

I attended a panel discussion a few days before the award presentation with a dozen of my fellow colleagues. We heard two hours of testimony from children around the state, some of whom battled homelessness, others suffered from physical or sexual abuse, and some who struggled in the foster care system.

We heard the problems encountered by a gay high schooler, and from a remarkable 11-year old who battled depression and anxiety. School social workers assist students as these through the problems they face everyday. I can not express in words the amount of gratitude for their hard work and dedication to their job. They often touch many lives and save countless others, often unnoticed and underappreciated in their crucial role in educating our students. I am honored to have been bestowed an award from an organization that advocates for the betterment of the education of their students.

I am proud to receive this award and will continue to fight to fund education. Despite the tough fiscal times, I have done my best to avoid cuts to education while looking for potential cuts elsewhere.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Every other Tuesday at 6:05 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

Nov. 1
7-9 p.m.

Location: Sterling Heights Public Library
(40255 Dodge Park)

Nov. 29
7-9 P.M.

Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library
(35891 Gratiot, north of 15 Mile)

Contact My Office

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